

Section 504: Eligibility and Employment Provisions



Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, often referred to as Section 504, is a national law protecting qualified individuals from discrimination based on disability. Section 504 addresses areas of education and employment by protecting individuals with special needs from discrimination in areas such as job recruitment, admission to educational institutions and treatment for medical issues. This law also covers:

- Reasonable accommodations for employees with disabilities
- Program accessibility
- Effective communication with people who have hearing or vision disabilities
- Accessible new construction and alterations

Section 504 prohibits programs receiving federal money from discriminating on the basis of disability.

Eligibility

Individuals with special needs may qualify for protection under Section 504 if they have a physical or mental impairment substantially limiting one or more physical or psychological functions, have a record of such impairment or are regarded as having such impairment. Impairments include difficulty with:

- Self-care
- Performing manual tasks
- Walking
- Seeing
- Hearing

- Speaking
- Breathing
- Learning
- Working

A mandatory evaluation assesses a person's level of impairment from a variety of sources. Section 504 also protects the relatives and caretakers of individuals with special needs against discrimination.

Employment

Under Section 504, employment discrimination is prohibited against "otherwise qualified individuals with disabilities." Individuals must meet skill, experience and educational requirements of a job and must be able to perform essential job functions with or without reasonable accommodation. Reasonable accommodation is any modification or adjustment to a job or work environment enabling a qualified applicant or employee with a special need to participate in the application process or to perform essential job functions. The accommodation must not present undue hardship on the employer (determined on a case-by-case basis).

Section 504 also provides vocational training, education and employment services for eligible adults with special needs. To locate state agencies providing such services, visit the Military OneSource website (www.militaryonesource.mil/EFMP) or contact the installation's Exceptional Family Member Program office.



MilitaryOneSource.mil/EFMP

Exceptional Family Member Program support is available for military families with special needs. For more information, please contact your installation EFMP office or visit MilitaryOneSource.mil/EFMP, an official Department of Defense website.